



February 16th, 2023

The Honorable Liz Linehan Co-Chair
The Honorable Ceci Maher, Co-Chair
The Honorable Anne Dauphinais, Ranking Member
The Honorable Lisa Seminara, Ranking Member
Committee on Children
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol Building, Room 011
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB 1005: An Act Concerning a Study of The Post-Pandemic Needs of Children

Chairwoman Linehan, Chairwoman Maher, Vice Chairwoman Keitt, Vice Chairwoman Kushner, Ranking Members Dauphinais and Seminara, and members of the Committee on Children:

My name is Rebecca Ruitto , I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Chair of the Connecticut Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (CTAMFT). I am a resident of Colchester and own a private mental health practice in West Hartford. I am writing on behalf of CTAMFT in support of SB 1005: An Act Concerning a Study of The Post-Pandemic Needs of Children.

CTAMFT currently represents over 2,500 licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) through-out Connecticut. Marriage and Family Therapists are employed in various clinical settings throughout the state, serving diverse mental health needs via: private outpatient treatment; community based and outreach programs; in-home services; school-based services; and agency inpatient and outpatient care, among others.

Connecticut has continued to see an increase in mental health needs across children and adolescents. Diagnoses that are on an upwards trend include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorders, and substance use disorders. This trend has increased the need for supports in the form of outpatient, school-based, and higher level of care options (in-home, intensive outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization, inpatient); as well as ongoing escalated needs involving additional systems (DCF, police, and court services).

An establishment of a task force to continue to assess and support the needs of the children as well as the various systems they are engaged with is crucial as we move into a post-pandemic period. CTAMFT asks that on this task force, mental health providers of all professions (marriage and family therapists, social workers, professional counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, alcohol and drug counselors, etc.) be represented on the committee. Inclusion of all mental health professions would create a comprehensive committee to meet the needs of children and adolescents across the various settings and systems in which they take part in.

CTAMFT is supportive of SB 1005 and urges you to support SB 1005. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Ruitto, LMFT

Rebecca Ruitto, LMFT
Chair, CTAMFT